

AH Committee

From: P. Denise La Costa <pdenise@lacostarealtyhawaii.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2019 7:35 PM
To: AH Committee
Subject: Makila Gardens Subdivision
Attachments: TESTIMONY for July 3-2019 AH committee meeting (P. Denise La Costa).docx

Dear Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

Attached is my written testimony. I implore you to look at the TOTAL effects on Maui this project will have. Not just housing, but ALL the effects on Maui. I realize that there are redundancies, but I was trying to drive home the important reasons why this project should be DENIED! Many Mahalos.

With Warm Regards and Aloha,

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2018-2023 - Maui County Planning Commissioner

2018 Dame of Honor-Orthodox Order of St. John Priory of Russia - Hawai'i Priory

2017-2018 President - Maui Commercial Round Table

2015 through 2016 State Chair - Realtor Political Action Committee

2013 President - Realtors Association of Maui

2004 through Present - Member West Maui Community Task Force

ABR-Accredited Buyers' Representative

SFR-Short Sale and Foreclosure Resource

DR-Designated Realtor

RENE-Real Estate Negotiations Expert

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“Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character.”

—William Arthur Ward

TESTIMONY AGAINST MAKILA F ARMS

In full disclosure, I am a current member of the Planning Commission. I do not have the authority, nor am I speaking on behalf of the Commission, or any members who currently serve thereon. I am speaking as an individual citizen, a resident of Launiupoko and member of the West Maui Community.

EVERYONE is in agreement that the housing crisis is real and needs immediate attention! Not only for workforce/affordable residences but for the homeless population as well, which is growing larger by the day.

After living on Maui for almost 30, the West Side for almost 23 years, and Launiupoko for 9.5 years. I purchased my lot in 2003 and moved onto my lot in my very modest manufactured home on March 10, 2010. I have seen it change tremendously. Most notably, my parcel of land. Initially it was lush and green; it now is brown. My yard and plants are brown and wilting. It is not only expensive to use potable water to irrigate land, but it is a waste of a resource that is most certainly finite as the planet warms. The buffalo grass that almost surrounds my parcel, has to be weed wacked each week to reduce the danger of a spreading fire-God Forbid-should we have another that threatens West Maui.

For years, citizen groups have done a tremendous amount of work individually and by getting community feedback in workshops to establish land classifications and uses and what is the best use for each community and the island of Maui as a whole. The process is ongoing. However, approval of this project by the AH Committee of the Council is basically saying that neither the hours of work, nor review and input from West Side residents involved in this citizen group is relevant. The West Side community plan is being updated as I write. I have attended these meetings and have heard the committee and community say, affordable housing is desperately needed but it *has* to be where schools, bus lines and services are nearby so that children and residents can ride their bikes or walk to work and/or to school and back. Overwhelmingly, the dozens of resident participants in workshops have said NO development from Olowalu to Front Street. The land cannot support more development. SHOW ME THE WATER! The developer(s) cannot.

As you know, the land is zoned agriculture. *This proposed development is adjacent to the two previous parcels that were denied for, among other reasons, lack of water.* The Fire Danger sign as you enter Launiupoko, shows the neighborhood is rated as SEVERE DANGER. We have so little water here, it is difficult to grow crops; all farms and landscaping is suffering. Again, show me the water!

Please don't be fooled by this project's developer who is seeking approval because the 'end' plan is to CPR these lots. *The profits of the developer will increase* while the irreversible damage to our natural resources will last forever. The density will increase, the number of septic tanks close to the ocean is alarming and the stress on the aina without adequate water will cause irreparable damage to the land and current infrastructure. This is not the solution to the housing crisis. If the developer is being truly altruistic as he purports, then he would realize that placing new developments away from transportation lines, schools, restaurants and other services is not doing anyone a favor. There are land swaps that could possibly be done to make sure the housing that is so desperately needed is built where it makes the most sense for the people living there and not just using the land they speculatively purchased several years ago hoping to make a huge gain. I fully understand that we live in a capitalist society and everyone is entitled to make a profit. However, these Developers, in fact all developers, should look not only at their proforma for a project and how much they will enrich themselves, but what will it cost the aina? At what the actual citizens of West Maui and all of Maui need and how will our beautiful island be best served and the aina survive the onslaught of more and more homes using more and more resources.

Everyone in this room agrees on one thing: Maui needs Affordable Rentals and Affordable housing.

Again, if altruism **were** the driving force for the building of 'affordable homes' albeit not all of the homes will be 'affordable', then Developers need to work with the county in a public-private partnership. Make them all

affordable in perpetuity, as Hale O' Maui does. Rather than look at 'not in our neighborhood', we all should look at it is where can we, the county, the community house the citizens of Maui comfortably, affordably and build affordable homes, yet not put a financial burden by not having bike or ambulatory access to their jobs, schools, stores, etc. nearby.

People who take the time to attend in person to show support for their side of the hearing, give Personal testimony, those who take the time to send in written testimony and the 'community testimony' should be analyzed—it is imperative.

- 1) **WATER:** The county has a "Show me the Water" bill. As a resident of Launiupoko I pay for and therefore expect to have water when I turn on my spigot. The non-potable water is turned on and off at the discretion of Launiupoko Irrigation Company. We have had it turned off for more than a week. Yes there is potable water and with much expense, you can convert to that system. And pay almost 50% more for the use. So, if the already built properties don't have sufficient water, will building dozens of new homes have the same? Using potable water for landscaping and household use will diminish the amount of water that is available for everyone, and surely the rates will increase with usage increasing.
- 2) **NATURAL RESOURCES:** All you have to do is look at what is happening to the ocean and reef in Kihei at the old Maui Lu site to understand that this will happen on an even larger scale to the ocean from Puamana to Launiupoko, and possibly beyond. Additionally, the beach park and the parking for it is inadequate now. When the waves are up, you cannot find a place to park for a quarter of a mile. Add dozens and dozens more people using their neighborhood beach park and it will look like Waikiki. The reef and water will suffer even more than they are now. Once damaged, they are hard pressed to recover.
- 3) **WASTEWATER/SEPTIC TANKS:** How many dozens and dozens of septic tanks and leech fields would be installed with the project? With the ocean directly below and the water table close to the proposed subdivisions what kind of irreversible damage will be done to the reefs and ocean?
- 4) **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Traffic: Everyone complained about traffic leaving West Maui on the old highway. It is no better with the bypass because people do not know how to merge. Add to this dozens and dozens and dozens of additional cars going up Haniu street, past the round about and lining up to get onto the highway at Kai Hele Ku or going down Punakea and lining up at Hokiokoi. Yikes!
- 5) **FIRE:** Dry grass, hotter temperatures, less water, formula for disaster. Where are the water hydrants to help extinguish another fire? Where is the water in those hydrants? It is terrible and heartbreaking that my friends and our neighbors lost their homes, thankfully no one lost their life. And, thank the good Lord that the winds shifted last August or more of West Maui would have been destroyed. Add how many more homes, more strain on resources and this is a disaster waiting to happen.

Affordable Housing is crucial to the stability of an economy and city. *Sensible, truly affordable, in perpetuity, rental units and homes* are crucial for affordable housing units to be always available and affordable. These are the projects that need to be built.

I have watched Na Hale O'Maui build homes and lease them to families for years then when they move out, the homes go back to be re-rented to another family needing affordable housing. This is the same model the county should use. Also, might it make sense for Maui county to look at duplex and fourplex options for housing? Our families need housing. Perhaps a private/public partnership to get these homes built is the way to go? Tax credits and incentives for developers to build truly affordable units that have decent construction and be available in perpetuity. If developers are truly interested in helping the people of Maui and not the lure of putting millions in their bank accounts-they could build homes and apartments on county owned land or use the land that is on bus lines, and within walking distance to schools and shops

and stores that already has access to water and sewer laterals. I sound like a broken record, but these are the salient items that need to be focused upon when affordable housing projects are presented to the county.

I BEG YOU...PLEASE LOOK AT ALL OF THE ISSUES. LOOK AT THE TOTAL PICTURE NOT JUST THE HOMES THAT THESE PROJECTS ARE SUPPOSED TO BUILD....PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!

Consider the water issue; At some point the water will be gone.

Consider what those who participated in the Community Plan suggested;

Consider the permanent damage to the aina for profit;

Consider the additional stress on the kai for profit-the reef is already injured; hundreds of septic tanks just above the water table is unconscionable. Why tempt disaster?

Consider the additional number of cars on the road because there is no public transportation to or from the area the bypass will continue to be chocked 3 times a day;

Consider that children cannot walk or ride their bikes to school. Parents will have to make arrangements to drop off and pick up (more traffic).

Consider the iwi kapuna that could well be interred on this land;

Consider the riparian water rights that the Native Hawaiians have and are not being acknowledged or provided and what CWRM's findings were.

Consider all of the citizens of Maui who testified to " yes we need affordable housing but not where there are complex and water issues to mitigate.

AND PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE,

Consider the irreparable damage these subdivisions will cause and how few will be truly served but the land will be permanently injured.

Don't be fooled by the 'affordable housing projects' that the developers say they want to build. If they truly wanted affordable housing, then the entire project would be affordable and the homes and rental units would be affordable in perpetuity. Please don't turn the West Maui Mountains into a place like Mariner's Ridge on O'ahu-though they have water. We live on Maui because we want the peace, beauty and open space of Maui. We live on Maui because it is No Ka Oi. We live on Maui because we don't want the crowds that O'ahu and the mainland have. We are different from O'ahu, thankfully so. We need to keep Maui, Maui. Projects like these are so much better suited as infill areas where all the transportation, schools, utilities, etc are readily accessible. Easier for children to get around, less driving for parents, fewer expenses because there are alternatives for transportation.

PLEASE DENY THIS THIS PROJECT AND LOCATE NEW AFFORDABLE PROJECTS IN TOWN, MAINTAIN AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN AG AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, PLEASE SAVE WHAT WATER WE HAVE LEFT.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

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